

## Blu-Ray Review: John Wayne's Original 'True Grit' Given HD Treatment

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 20, 2010 - 12:18pm

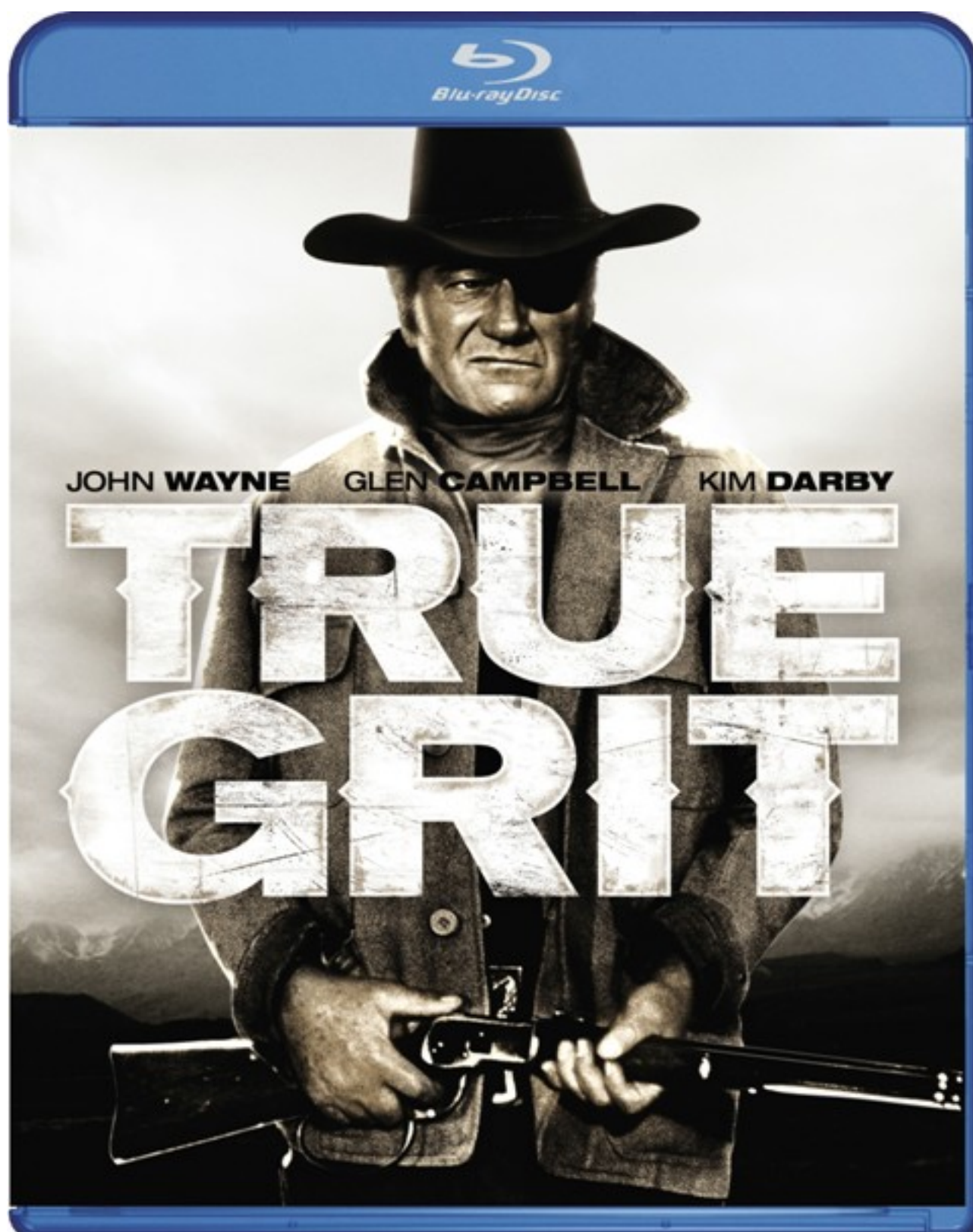
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CHICAGO – There are few Westerns more iconic than the original “True Grit.” Ask a hundred people to name the first Western that comes to mind and I firmly believe that “True Grit” will be one of the most-mentioned films. It is beloved enough that Joel and Ethan Coen have remade it into an already award-winning drama that will be released this week with Jeff Bridges, Matt Damon, Josh Brolin, and Hailee Steinfeld. Catch up with the original on Blu-ray before you see the new film.



Blu-Ray Rating: **3.5/5.0**

Based on the 1968 novel by Charles Portis, the 1969 Henry Hathaway film earned John Wayne his only Oscar (coming twenty years after his only other acting nomination for “Sands of Iwo Jima”...although to this critic his best work will always be in “The Searchers”) as Rooster Cogburn, a legendary deputy marshal hired by Mattie Ross (Kim Darby) to find the man who killed her father and fled with the family savings. Mattie and Rooster are joined by a headstrong Texas Ranger (Glen Campbell) and the unusual trio heads into Indian Territory to find justice.



True Grit was released on Blu-ray on December 14th, 2010

Photo credit: Paramount

The reason "True Grit" has become one of the archetypal Westerns is obvious — it is about right vanquishing wrong. It is about John Wayne finding justice for a little girl. It features larger-than-life characters, great action scenes, and the vast expanse of the old West. It's a gorgeous movie, even more beautiful than you remember, and it looks great in HD. There were times when it felt like the HD picture was a bit too polished and airbrushed but it generally looks great. The film also includes an English 5.1 DTS-HD Master Audio track along with a Restored Mono track that sounds a bit more appropriate for the film. It could just be because, like many people, I grew up watching John Wayne movies on a small dusty TV but it's somewhat jarring to see "True Grit" in 1080p with a 5.1 audio track. It feels a bit overdone but modern audiences unfamiliar with the film from their youth probably won't feel the same.

As for special features, "True Grit" includes a few mini-featurettes, all in SD. I've written this before and I'll write it again but collections of featurettes that run ten minutes or less should always include a "Play All" feature and should usually be compiled into one longer documentary. Mini-featurettes are annoying. Much stronger is the commentary by screenwriter and Western expert Jeb Rosebrook, Western historian J. Stuart Rosebrook, and True West Magazine editor Bob Boze Bell, but even that was included in the 2007 DVD release of the film. In other words, there are no new special features. No, the HD version of the trailer doesn't count.

"True Grit" is a Western classic by reputation alone, a status that's likely to increase as more young viewers find it after seeing the Coens version of the novel. It's not my favorite Western but there are so few of them available in HD that any addition to the Blu-ray catalog is a nice one and this is certainly an essential film in the genre. It will make many fans of the Duke happy this holiday season.

#### Special Features:

- o Commentary by Jeb Rosebrook, Bob Boze Bell, and J. Stuart Rosebrook
- o True Writing
- o Working with the Duke
- o Aspen Gold: Locations of True Grit
- o The Law and the Lawless
- o Theatrical Trailer

*"True Grit" stard John Wayne, Kim Darby, Glen Campbell, Strother Martin, and Robert Duvall. It was written by Marguerite Roberts and directed by Henry Hathaway. It was released by Paramount on December 14th, 2010. It is rated G and runs 127 minutes.*



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